

Lawmakers Have Been Fighting for New Planes For Years –Move Will Ensure Continued Strategic Importance of Newburgh Base

Stewart is Region's #1 Employer - New Planes Will Ensure it Can Continue to be a Force for Growth

Schumer, Gillibrand and Hinchey Fought Successfully to Continue the C-17 Program and Worked to See That Stewart Received Its Fair Share

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the Air Force has named Stewart Air National Guard Base as its preferred choice for a C-17 mission that will boost the 105th Airlift Wing's ability to provide trans-Atlantic flights to service members abroad. The move will help ensure the base's continued strategic importance enabling it to continue as one of the Lower Hudson Valley's largest employers, generating over \$200 million in annual economic activity for the region. Schumer, Gillibrand and Hinchey worked together to ensure the continuation of the C-17 program.

"With this announcement of new, state-of-the art C-17's headed our way, we can truly say: new jobs and increased economic activity are cleared for take-off at Stewart Air National Guard Base. For years we've been working to bring these planes to Stewart and today we can declare victory, not just for Stewart Air Force Base and our men and women in uniform, but for the economy of the entire Hudson Valley," said Schumer. "Stewart is the region's largest employer, so maintaining its strategic importance is critical, not just for the men and women serving overseas, but for working families across the region."

"C-17's are a critical tool used to transport our military in their deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as disaster areas like Haiti," said Senator Gillibrand. "The men and women of the 105th Airlift Wing at Stewart Air National Guard base have been provided a great opportunity to upgrade their aging fleet to supply our troops in the field and fly relief missions around the world. Placing these aircraft at Stewart will bolster our military's ability to supply missions across the world and will also support job creation and economic growth in the Hudson

Valley.”

“I've been working with the Air Force to bring C-17s to Stewart for quite some time,” said Hinchey. “This decision is critical to the base's future and the safety of our troops. By delivering efficient and reliable C-17s, we are helping to protect the strategic importance of the base, thereby ensuring that it continues to be a job creator and economic engine for the Lower Hudson Valley. This is great news for the region, Stewart and the 105th Airlift Wing.”

“The continued expansion and development of Stewart Airport has been one of my top priorities since joining Congress,” said Rep. John Hall. “The Air Force's decision to bring new C-17 aircraft to Stewart will spur job growth and help maintain our nation’s air superiority for years to come. I am proud of the collective work of the New York delegation, officials at Stewart Airport and the United States Air Force that came to this decision.”

The Air Force analyzed the mission capabilities, infrastructure capacity, environmental factors and cost of implementation at a range of bases across the country in determining where to base the C-17s. Stewart beat out Memphis International Airport in Tennessee and Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport in Martinsburg in the final phase of consideration.

The C-17s will replace the 105th Airlift Wing's aging C-5A fleet, which is one of the oldest in the Air Force inventory. As one of only two National Guard bases on the Eastern Seaboard that provides trans-Atlantic flights to service members abroad, Stewart provides essential services for U.S. armed forces, especially in the responsive delivery of both heavy and light forces and cargo to meet rapid deployment.

Substantial upgrades are needed at Stewart in order to accept the C-17 mission. Hinchey, Schumer and Gillibrand announced earlier this year that they had secured millions in the Fiscal Year 2011 defense authorization bill for an aircraft conversion facility to position the Stewart Air National Guard Base to accept C-17 aircraft. They later worked to ensure the funding provision was also included in the Fiscal Year 2011 defense appropriations bill. The funding would be used to construct a composite material shop area and reconfigure space needed to meet the unique requirements of the C-17. The squadron ops area will also be expanded to accommodate an increased number of aircrews.

Schumer, Gillibrand and Hinchey have continually worked to ensure that Stewart remains an essential and strategic base for the Air National Guard. In January, Hinchey announced a \$4 million federal investment to pay for the construction of a solar farm at the base that will serve as a model for other military installations across the country, which are required to generate 25 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2025. Last March, Schumer, Gillibrand and Hinchey announced more than \$3.6 million for Stewart from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which they strongly supported and voted to pass.